

did not conquer Gaul in one campaign. Another illusion by which Napoleon was misled during the campaign of Moscow, and perhaps past experience rendered it very excusable, was the belief that the Emperor Alexander would propose peace when he saw him at the head of his army on the Russian territory. The prolonged stay of Bonaparte at Moscow can indeed be accounted for in no other way than by supposing that he expected the Russian Cabinet would change its opinion and consent to treat for peace. However, whatever might have been the reason, after his long and useless stay in Moscow Napoleon left that city with the design of taking up his winter quarters in Poland ; but Fate now frowned upon Napoleon, and in that dreadful retreat the elements seemed leagued with the Russians to destroy the most formidable army ever commanded by one chief. To find a catastrophe in history comparable to that of the Beresina we must go back to the destruction of the legions of Varus.

Notwithstanding the general dismay which prevailed in Paris that capital continued tranquil, when by a singular chance, on the very day on which Napoleon evacuated the burning city of Moscow, Mallet attempted his extraordinary enterprise. This General, who had always professed Republican principles, and was a man of bold decided character, after having been imprisoned for some time, obtained the permission of Government to live in Paris in a hospital house situated near the Barriere du Trone. Of Mallet's conspiracy it is not necessary to say much after the excellent account given of it in the Memoirs of the Due de Rovigo. Mallet's plan was to make it be believed that Bonaparte had been killed at Moscow, and that a new Government was established under the authority of the Senate. But what could Mallet do ? Absolutely nothing : and had his Government continued three days he would have experienced a more favorable chance than that which he ought reasonably to have expected. He asserted that the Emperor was dead, but an *estafette* from Russia would reveal the truth, resuscitate Napoleon, and overwhelm with confusion Mallet and his proclamations. His enterprise was that of a madman. The